GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1228
ANSWERED ON:30.11.2005
SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS IN RURAL AREAS
Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba;Meghwal Shri Kailash;Verma Shri Ravi Prakash

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the biggest challenge in the delivery of rural health care is ensuring availability of doctors in the Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and the Community Health Centres (CHCs)

(b) if so, whether the Union Government has made a suggestion to the State Governments to increase the retirement age of doctors to 65 years;

(c) if so, the response of the State Governments thereto; and

(d) the measures suggested by the Union Government to meet the shortage of doctors in rural areas?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) Yes, Sir. The biggest challenge in the delivery of Rural Health Care Services is to ensure the availability of services of doctors in PHCs and CHCs. In the CHCs about 40.9% of Surgeons, 24.6% of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, 41.1% of Physicians and about 42.8% of Paediatricians posts were vacant. Overall about 37.1% of the sanctioned posts of specialists at CHC were vacant. At present 700 PHCs are without doctors for reasons such delays in recruitment, in appropriate person policy and also lack of basic amenities and incentives for working in the rural areas.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) A number of States have taken various initiatives such as compulsory rural/difficult area posting for admission to post-graduate courses and as a pre-requisite for promotion, foreign assignment or training abroad; compulsory rotation of doctors on completion of prescribed tenure as per classification of locations; contractual appointment of doctors; of foregoing non-practicing allowance and undertaking practice without compromising on assigned duties, as per the service rules, offering incentive form of allowance etc. to ensure their presence in rural areas but it seems not to have yielded an appreciable results.

(d) The measures suggested, to ensure availability of services of doctors in rural areas, by a Task Group constituted on the subject under National Rural Health Mission are as below:

Increase in the age of retirement of doctors giving preference of posting near hometown;

Decentralization of recruitment at district level;

Walk-in-interview and contractual appointment of doctors;

Enhancing the salary for posting in rural areas by one-third;

Increasing the admission capacity in medical colleges for Anesthesia;

Reviving the Diploma Course in Anesthesia;

To start one year Certificate Course in Anesthesia for Medical Officers working in the system at present to be given by National Board of Examination;

Recognition of five hundred bedded Hospitals to provide the facility for conducting the above course;

Hiring of private practitioners on case-to-case basis.